

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL



Letter to the People:

Honorable Delegates,

Welcome to the fifth annual Freeman Model United Nations Conference! We are excited to chair the ECOSOC committee and look forward to hearing the solutions you bring. Your chairs will be Vrusha Pramod and Saanvi Gourishetty. Vrusha is a junior in her fourth year of Model UN at Freeman and is part of the school's track and cross-country team. Saanvi is a junior and is also in her fourth year of Model UN. She is part of the Freeman track and cross-country team.

We want to remind you that in order to keep this committee fair, you should take the time to thoroughly research your topics and use the information you find to accurately represent the individual you have been assigned. Please remember to refrain from using any personal viewpoints, as this may create unnecessary bias. We anticipate hearing accurate representations of your individual as we discuss international issues during the committee sessions. While position papers are not required, they are necessary to be considered for an award, and are typically recommended in order for you to gain a further understanding of your position. Chairs will recognize delegates who make significant contributions to both moderated and unmoderated caucuses and in turn, those delegates will receive awards.

If you have any questions, you can contact us at ecosocfreemunv@gmail.com. Best of luck with your research and preparation!

Your Chairs,

Vrusha Pramod and Saanvi Gourishetty



Douglas S. Freeman High School Model United Nations Conference

Economic and Social Council

Topic I: *Post Pandemic Access to Medicine*

Topic II: *Impact of Climate Change on Small Island Nations*

Committee Overview:

ECOSOC is made up of 54 members under the UN Charter. It brings people together to discuss contemporary issues and promote collective action for a sustainable world. ECOSOC is empowered to coordinate the economic and social work of various UN specialized agencies. The committee's dynamic composition reflects a commitment to achieving the UN's mission of promoting peace, prosperity, and social progress worldwide.

Topic I: Access to Medicine

The world experienced an unprecedented global health crisis with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly impacted access to medicine. The pandemic highlighted the importance of ensuring access to essential medications for everyone, regardless of their socioeconomic status or geographic location. During the height of the pandemic, healthcare systems

faced intense pressure and capacity limitations. Governments and healthcare organizations worldwide struggled to efficiently provide medical supplies, vaccines, and other essential drugs. This indicated a need for resilient healthcare infrastructure as well as global collaboration to address access to medicine.

The pharmaceutical supply chain can be defined as a network of various interconnected operations which coordinates the production and delivery of goods. Before the pandemic, supply chains generally operated with a high degree of efficiency and experienced little to no disruptions during their distribution process. The industry had established plans to address possible challenges such as natural disasters or transportation issues, however nothing could have prepared them for a global pandemic.

Supply Chain Disruptions

In 2023, global companies stated that the biggest supply chain threat was the rising cost of raw materials. Disruptions such as labor shortages and stockpiling of

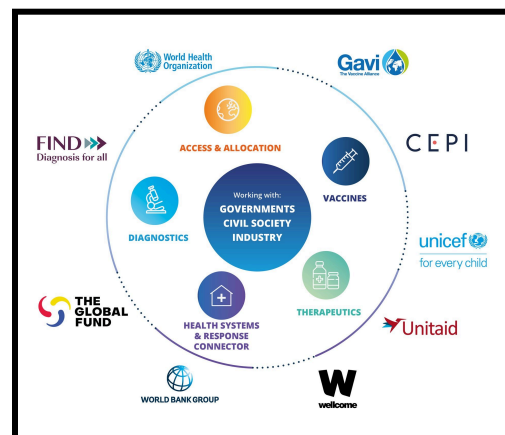
resources resulted in shortages of essential medicines and other healthcare supplies, which were exacerbated by pandemic-related challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic triggered lockdowns, import and export restrictions, and production challenges in multiple countries, resulting in bottlenecks in the distribution and delivery of medications. These disruptions had far-reaching consequences, impacting both developed and developing nations' access to medicine. Additionally, relying on a limited number of suppliers further complicated the situation. Because many pharmaceutical companies faced production delays and capacity constraints, governments implemented export restrictions on certain medications and medical supplies to maintain an adequate supply within their borders. By doing this, they made sure that essential medicines were readily available to meet the needs of their own populations; however, these export restrictions could result in disparities where other countries, particularly those with fewer resources, did not have access to an adequate supply of medications.

Medicine Access Initiatives

The Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) is a United Nations-backed public health organization established in 2010. It was established with the support of Unitaid, another organization backed up by the UN. The World Health Organization (WHO) has also actively been involved with MPP since its inception. Certain pharmaceutical companies could argue that MPP's could reduce profit incentives that lead to hesitancy from patent holders. These companies also tend to rely on patents to

protect their investments in research and development, and the sharing of patents in a pool could be perceived as an obstacle when trying to maintain exclusivity. However, the MPP operates as a licensing mechanism to increase access to affordable and quality-assured medicines in low and middle-income countries. They negotiate with different pharmaceutical companies to obtain voluntary licenses for essential medicines, facilitating the production and distribution of them in underserved regions. By consolidating patents, MPP reduces the costs for generic drug manufacturers, thus making vital medications more accessible.

Figure 1: Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator



The Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, launched in April 2020, was a global collaboration aimed at accelerating the development, production, and equitable distribution of COVID-19 treatments and vaccines. The initiative operates in four main areas. It focuses on accelerating vaccine development and ensuring fair access, supporting the development and deployment of diagnostic tests, expediting the research and equitable distribution of effective treatments, and

finally strengthening healthcare systems in less developed countries. The ACT Accelerator's approach emphasizes global unanimity, recognizing that defeating the complications created by the pandemic requires inclusive efforts and equitable access to life-saving tools for all nations. Despite challenges such as supply chain disruptions and the evolving COVID-19 variants, the initiative remains a crucial platform for international collaboration and sets a precedent for addressing future global health challenges with urgency and collective action.

Analysis

In the aftermath of the 2020 lockdown, various efforts to improve access to medicine are in place. Global alliances, such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, continue to play a critical role in helping supply chains run smoothly and ensuring equal access to medicines worldwide.

Organizations like Doctors Without Borders advocate community-based health initiatives as well as empower local communities to address healthcare imbalances. As of 2023, MSF has expanded their role and is now managing programs in active war zones such as Gaza, Ukraine, and Sudan.

World Health Organization (WHO), aims to bring together global standards and accelerate the introduction of medicines without compromising anyone's safety.

Questions to Consider:

1. How can WHO make sure that all populations, regardless of their

geographic location or economic situation, have fair access to every necessary medication?

2. Are richer countries obligated to help developing countries access the medicine they need?
3. What are ways the UN can prevent countries from hoarding medicine?

Topic II: Impact of Climate Change on Small Island Nations

Figure 2: Effect of low climate finance



Small island developing states (SIDS) are areas directly impacted by climate change. 2017 was the most devastating and deadly cycle season with Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria, and Nate. Sea-level rise is a significant factor that is having visible effects on coastal cities and rural communities. Small island developing states are prone to all forms of natural disasters, such as storm surges, landslides, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes. In addition, they are vulnerable to anthropogenic disasters such as marine oil spills. As natural and anthropogenic disasters compound SIDS, infrastructure,

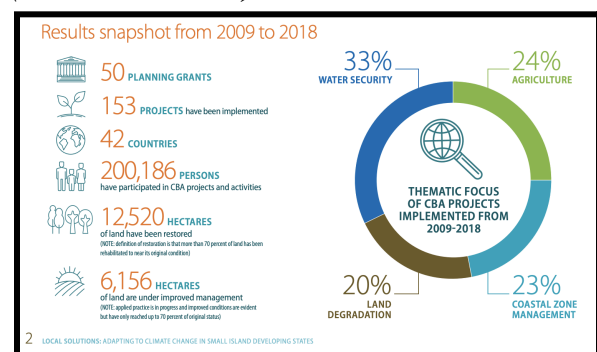
health and well-being, and water and food security are all being affected. In many SIDS, a high percentage of their population, settlements, and economic assets are located in the low-elevation coastal zone, less than ten meters above sea level. This means that in the event of a natural disaster, it is possible that a significant percentage of the population and economy would be severely affected. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirmed through reports that SIDS are increasingly affected by changing precipitation patterns, coral bleaching, and invasive species partially through severe changes in biodiversity. Specifically, coral bleaching causes coral to be vulnerable to disease, stunts growth and affects their reproduction, ultimately causing species that depend on coral communities in severe harm. Small island nations are visibly the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change; however, it is notable that they are also responsible for less than one percent of greenhouse gas emissions.

The Effect on Biodiversity

Climate change presents a threat to biodiversity in SIDS in terms of marine life, and the ecosystem. Industries such as fisheries account for over half of the GDP of small island nations. SIDS countries are highly vulnerable to external economic and financial shocks, at least 35 percent more than other developing countries. 2020 was particularly difficult. As a result of the pandemic, the SIDS gross national product was estimated to decrease by 9 percent in 2020, while in other developing countries it is 3.3 percent according to IMF data. For example, marine fisheries and seafood

industries supported around \$244.1 billion in economic activity. These industries also supported 1.74 million jobs in 2017. In addition to the economic impact, biodiversity is something that small island nations rely on for food supply, clean water, reduced beach erosion, soil and sand formation, and protection from storm surges. The existence of maintaining biodiversity in SIDS is crucial in the prevention of additional costs that result from ongoing climate change, soil erosion, pollution, floods, and natural disasters. SIDS occupy around 0.5% of the global surface, however, they give homes to more than 20% of existing biodiversity and 40% of the world's coral reefs.

Figure 3: GEF Small Grants Programme (A Local Solution)



The SGP (Small Grants Programme) is a local solution implemented by UNDP. In order to improve climate resilience, SGP partnered with Australian Aid and was able to improve resilience in 37 SIDS. A major factor in this accomplishment came from funding from DFAT (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade), \$12 million in funding. In order to achieve a correct percentage of funding per the partnership's needs, they partnered with organizations. A goal of the

Programme is to provide clear policy lessons and mainstream community-based adaptation (CBA) within national processes and scale up best practices. SGP's Primary stakeholders are more poor and vulnerable communities; they are most at risk since they live in extremely fragile ecosystems and are dependent upon natural resources. This global program works towards achieving global environmental sustainability and the improvement of local livelihoods by supporting local leadership. The United Nations Development Programme/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/ PAPP) has been partnering with SGP since 1996. This partnership has helped in supporting local Palestine communities by addressing environmental and developmental challenges. In addition to environmental impacts, SGP has made an impact on women and marginalized groups through helping find alternative income, and assistance in generating a sustainable livelihood. They realize these specific objectives and invest in capacity development and awareness-raising initiatives.

SAMOA Pathway - 2014

More so than in the past through Barbados, and the Mauritius Strategy program of action, the SAMOA pathway presented a different approach. When meeting the international community gathered in Samoa for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, they primarily focused on forging a new pathway for SIDS to gain sustainable development. Small island

nations are putting effort into economic development, food security, disaster risk reduction, and ocean management. While focusing on these problems at the forefront among others, the SAMOA pathway recognized the impacts of the severe sea-level rise and climate change. The pathway aims to address challenges specific to SIDS and target priority areas. In addition, they fostered partnerships with the UN Agencies, development partners, and others to achieve these goals. Through the government's implementation of disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures, SIDS gain access to climate-resilient infrastructure. In addition, the National Climate Task Force has worked towards improvement as well. They launched a phase-down of highly polluting hydrofluorocarbons found in refrigerators, air conditioners, and other appliances. This has been launched to reduce HFC emissions by 85 percent over 15 years while increasing domestic production of alternatives. In 2016, in Fiji, after tropical cyclone Winston, more than 60 villages had to be relocated in order to reduce exposure and vulnerability to the lasting effects of the cyclone. While the relocation was seen as a non-negotiable idea at the time, it did not leave people without nationalistic concerns. After the Samoa pathway in 2014, they found that they underscored the need for support and coordination from the UN. They found the importance of transparent support from international financial institutions was visible as they were not able to fully take into account the specific needs and vulnerabilities of small island developing States. The SAMOA Pathway aims to

address the implementation of the Programme of action which would help in mobilizing international support. SIDS aims to strengthen local communities' resilience to climate change through sustainable nature-based solutions that optimize environmental, economic, and social outcomes. The adverse effects of climate change on SIDS posed the question if it is even safe to continue to develop there, leading to climate migration.

Analysis

SIDS represents 28 percent of developing states, as of 2022, that face economic and environmental vulnerabilities. The Paris Agreement's commitment to ensure development finance is indispensable that it is applied to SIDS as it is "consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development." Small island Nations are geographically smaller and more remote making them more susceptible to weather events and high extremity as well. Because of this, the implementation of Increased investment in disaster risk reduction (DRR) is crucial in order to prevent future risks as well as current ones that pose a threat.

Questions to Consider:

1. How can ECOSOC guarantee the SIDS have the resources they need despite considering the continuous challenges their marine ecosystems face?
2. With biodiversity at risk, how can ECOSOC ensure the stability of SIDS' GDP?
3. How can sustainability and the need for incoming natural resources and transportation be overall prioritized?
4. How can SIDS handle climate migration, could there be another solution besides relocation?
5. Do wealthier countries have an obligation to help SIDS? Or to take in their migrants?

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